

March 4, 2021

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I'm a Physician's Assistant at Westerly Hospital and New London Hospital. I live in South Kingstown in District 36. I'm writing in support of the Nursing Home Safe Staffing and Quality Care Act (H5012 Representative Slater).

As you know, our state is facing an unprecedented health, economic, and budget crisis, the result of the COVID-19 pandemic. None have felt this crisis as acutely as those of us in healthcare. So I was beyond angry to read in the Washington Post that the CEO of Genesis Healthcare, the largest nursing home company in the country, received a \$5.2 million retention bonus. That retention bonus was on top of his annual salary and another \$935,000 bonus. To rub salt in the wound, he retired two months after receiving this retention bonus, taking with him a \$650,000 retirement bonus and a \$300,000 consulting contract to advise the company. That's our tax money. Most Genesis residents are on Medicaid and Medicare, which means our tax dollars paid for this ludicrous "retention" payment. Never mind the hundreds of millions of dollars that Genesis received from various COVID relief bills.

It's not like this gentleman even did a good job guiding Genesis through the pandemic. Financially, the company is on the brink of bankruptcy. But more importantly, Genesis had over 2,800 residents die of COVID-19, a higher rate than other nursing home companies. So this individual did a bad job managing the finances of his company, did a bad job doing what we pay him to do (keeping residents safe), and took \$7 million of our tax dollars in the same year.

We work hard and pay a lot of taxes. I don't mind paying taxes that go to vital services. Many of my own patients are on RITE Care or Neighborhood, and I'm grateful they have that insurance. Nursing homes are a large chunk of our state budget, over \$300 million each year. That is money well spent if it is keeping our elderly safe, warm, fed, and cared for. But it is money down the drain if it goes to companies that siphon those dollars to their CEO instead of providing care for those in need. Or if that money goes to lobbyists lining up tonight to tell you nursing homes can't afford to do better.

As a medical professional and a taxpayer, I am urging you to support the Nursing Home Safe Staffing and Quality Care Act. I want our tax dollars going to patient care, not exorbitant CEO salaries. Thank you for your time.

Sean Eden, P.A.
South Kingstown